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The quality of pupil action researches in the light of research paradigm

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Abstract

The paper promotes and stresses the values of the research paradigm, the ways of using the paradigm by the pupil action researchers and the quality of teaching and learning processes influenced by the pupil researcher.

The first part *The strength of the pupil action researcher* is a place for discussion of the theoretical perception of that concept, in the second part *Adaptation of research paradigm* are elaborated paradigm such as positivism, interpretative and critical paradigm used by the pupils action researches. *A changed reflexive teaching and learning* influenced by pupils action research is the third part.

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1. Introduction

The contemporary classroom creates the unity of quality in teaching and quality in learning. Both are the results of the researches in the classroom and the researches on the classroom. The key point which is the connection between them is the relationship and the way of participation in the classroom. The research provides the learning and teaching with the information useful for better individuals and community, improved mutual contact and visible results for the other.

Because of that, researches and the changes in the classroom are on stage and become actualized in the action research roles of the teachers and pupils. The advantage of the pupil action research and the selection and usage of the research paradigm can contribute to proper teacher behavior, adequate use of the teaching strategies, and successful and satisfied individuals.

2. The strength of the pupil action researcher

Pupil as insider in the classroom is a crucial component in decision making. When the pupil decides to learn, to practice, to ask, to answer, ..., he/she should consult, communicate and coordinate with the others for achieving the individual, mutual and curriculum goals. If the teacher wants to understand the pupils' needs from their essence,

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he/she must leave a space to pupils for creating their learning environment. This will make "...a lot of positive influences on making conditions for democratic acting of peers, influence on developing a positive attitude towards the changes and strengthening the ability for leading the changes." (Iliev D. at all., 2011, p. 65)

In that direction is a meaning of *Action research pupil* (ARP) as "... a concept of defined behaviour of pupil in creating understandable perception, acceptable and wanted actions, expected conditions and achieved goals in their own, unique but inappropriate learning environment." (Iliev D., 2010, p. 4209) The consideration of Bognar B. and Zovko M. that "... pupils' action research represents an excellent opportunity for holistic learning by which pupils set out to obtain essential changes in their lives" and the other that "...everything they learned by doing was according to their own values and was deeply connected to their real needs", are acceptable for the beginning of writing about the research paradigm as a opportunity for understand pupil. (2009, p.41)

3. Adaptation of research paradigm

Research paradigm gives the direction to any researcher in defining the methodological proposals and perception of the classroom. Thus, the selection, designing and using one of the research paradigms, can have an influence on the role of the pupils and teachers in the classroom.

In our focus of interest are three major research paradigms, such as: positivism, interpretative and critical paradigm. Theoretically, positivistic view of the reality is explained as "neutral observation" (Carr W. and Kemmis K., 2002, p.73) which aims "...objectivity in social inquiry by means of adopting the methods and procedures of the natural or physical science". (Hitchcock G. and Hughes D., 1999, p. 22) The interpretative paradigm usually seen as what "...implies" or "means" for the question or problem..." (Lankaster C. and Knobel M., 2006, p. 33) goes deeper in the research problem and gives the opportunity to the researcher to give a sense to the results. The critical paradigm gives values to the gathered data and mirrors the subjectivity as a result.

Speaking about the "normal situation" in which the researcher is an adult person, when we speak about a pupil as an action researcher, the meaning and impact of the paradigm is increased. What does that mean? When the pupils decide to use the positivist track, they take a note, gather and measure only what they see and hear. If the pupils need and decide to interpret the situation in the classroom, they collect the data refined with the filter of feelings, emotions and creativity. Pupils as action researcher usually want to propose some decision, some activity, some direction which are opposite to the current practice. This strength for critics may be seen as a critical view on practice. (See details in Table 1)

Table 1. Pupil as user of the research paradigm

Types of paradigm	Pupil as learner	Pupil as researcher	Pupil as action researcher
Positivism	Count, Write, See, Hear, Paint, Memorize,	Count, Write, See, Hear, Paint, Memorize,	See, Hear, <i>Plan</i> ,
Interpretative	Think, Synthesize, Express values, Organize, Analyze, Interpret	Think, Synthesize, Express values, Organize, Analyze, Interpret	Feel, Express emotions, Express creativity
Critical	Evaluate	Evaluate	Evaluate, <i>Criticize</i> , <i>Transform</i> , <i>Change</i> ,

In a Table 1 it is obvious that the characteristic of pupil as a learner and pupil as a researcher are similar, which means that the role of the pupil in a modern teaching and learning process absolutely overlaps. On the other hand, there are a lot of specific characteristics of pupils as action researchers in all of three research paradigms. The teacher and pupils must be aware of usage of this paradigm and the ways of their practicing. Through this process of reviving, the teacher should act carefully and to have sensitivity for the pupil activity.

4. A changed reflexive teaching and learning

The experience of all participants in the teaching and learning process can be influenced by the realization of the pupils action researches, especially from the usage of the research paradigm. Actually, the reflexivity of the teacher must be upgraded with the new experience in which the beginning and ending of the teaching process will be

pupils' action researches. That means that the teacher can teach, learn and research successfully only if those activities start, follow and end with the pupil's action research seen in the light of the mentioned paradigm.

Table 2. Behavior and roles of teachers versus Paradigm used by pupils in their action research

Teacher behavior and roles	Pupil as action researcher		
	<i>Positivism</i>	<i>Interpretative</i>	<i>Critical</i>
Learn	Count, Write, See, Hear, Paint, Memorize	Count, Write, See, Hear, Paint, Memorize	Count, Write, See, Hear, Paint, Memorize
Research	Learn	Learn	Learn, Change
Teach	Feedback Attempt for participation	Demonstration of understanding	Reflexive teaching

The perception of the modern teacher whose aims are to teach accordingly to the classroom climate, pupils achievement, pupils problems, learning circumstances and given curricula, is the same as the architect who takes care about the constituency.

In a process of learning of teacher he/she should only open their eyes, ears and other senses to receive and accept the voice of pupils action researches, the voice as a result of a critical, interpretative and positivistic action research, but the voice of the individual pupil, too.

Whatever pupil used as a paradigm in their action research, a teacher in a process of researching the practice should learn about their findings, to learn about their opinions and to learn and change according to the critics of the situation achieved from the pupil action research.

When a pupil uses a positivistic paradigm in the action research, this can be understood as feedback and attempt to participate in teaching. If the pupils use the interpretative paradigm in their action research, that might be a demonstration of understanding of the current situation and that can become a milestone in creating a pupil oriented teaching process.

Resume

Research paradigm contributes to the designing of the educational research and gives a sense to the research finding, discover the idea of the researcher for practicing and living with the findings. The concept of "pupil as action researcher" strengthens and increases the participation of every person who is affected. Selection and following some of the research paradigm in the pupil action research discover the goal of the pupil and define their position in the teaching and learning process. The use of positivism in some action research can be treated as a way to elaborate something in the classroom, but the use of interpretative paradigm can be taken as intention for pupils to take didactical decision in their own learning. When the selected and used paradigm in the pupils research is critical paradigm, than the voice should be heard by all in and out the classroom.

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